

into the job together, and I learned a lot from her empathetic approach to public policy and political leadership. She never forgot that the bills we considered and the policies we crafted affected real people with real families. She always considered how a bill might affect our community's most disadvantaged families, and she often helped and sometimes forced the legislature to see through their eyes.

Barbara's legislative accomplishments reflected this focus. She took the lead in establishing Wisconsin's Children at Risk program and the state's Birth to Three Program, as well as a family leave system and an initiative to even the playing field for under-resourced schools. She also led the fight to fund programs that helped women to start or expand their own businesses, and she established and funded programs to curb sexual harassment and to support the victims of sexual assault.

Barbara Notestein's strong stands on key issues and her ability to forge working coalitions won her a leadership role. She was the first woman elected to serve as the Wisconsin Assembly's Assistant Majority Leader.

As a legislator, I admire Barbara Notestein. She reminds me that, to be an effective public servant, you need heart as much as you need smarts. I admire Barbara as an advocate for the public good. She reminds me that the most compelling way to lead others is by example.

Mr. Speaker, Representative Barbara Notestein has been a clear, strong and consistent voice for women and women's issues in the Wisconsin Legislature. I commend Milwaukee NOW on a perfect choice for Woman of the Year, and I warmly congratulate Barbara Notestein on her remarkable career of public service.

#### PRIVATE ACTIVITY BOND EXPANSION

#### HON. RICHARD E. NEAL

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, February 25, 1999*

Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, today Representative HOUGHTON and I are introducing the State and Local Investment Opportunity Act of 1999. This legislation would raise the annual limit on states' authority to issue their own tax-exempt private activity bonds to the greater of \$75 times population or \$225 million, and index the limit to inflation.

Tax-exempt private activity bonds finance affordable single and multifamily housing, manufacturing facilities, environmental, energy and utility projects, redevelopment of blighted areas, and student loans, in every state. The bond volume cap was set in 1986, and is adjusted only by growth in state population. Since 1986, inflation has cut the purchasing power of these bonds by almost 50 percent. In 1997 the demand for this bond authority exceeded supply by almost 50 percent, according to the National Council of State Housing Agencies.

In my own state, the Massachusetts Housing Finance Agency has financed first-time homes for more than 37,000 working families with mortgage revenue bonds, as well as financing more than 55,000 affordable apartments with multifamily housing bonds, both subject to the cap.

Since 1979, 5,241 loans resulting from the sale of mortgage revenue bonds have been made to my constituents, representing \$313 million of mortgage financing. And multifamily housing bonds account for 40 developments in my district, making 5,399 apartments available for low and moderate income workers.

Nationwide, mortgage revenue bonds have helped more than two million working families achieve the American Dream of home ownership. Many more families still need this help to achieve this Dream—help we can provide through this program.

Last year the Chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, BILL ARCHER, recognized the importance of this program and included an increase in the bond volume cap as part of the tax section of the Omnibus Consolidated and Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act. This was an important step forward. However, the current bond volume cap remains in place until 2003 at which time the increase begins to phase in, becoming fully effective in 2007. The phase-in provision makes clear the importance of making this adjustment to the bond volume cap, and reduces the revenue costs. Now I hope we can complete the job in this session of Congress by making the expansion of the bond volume cap effective this year, and by indexing the cap for inflation.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to cosponsor the State and Local Investment Opportunity Act of 1999, so their states can continue making vital investments in their citizens and communities.

#### INTRODUCTION OF THE URBAN ASTHMA REDUCTION ACT OF 1999

#### HON. BOBBY L. RUSH

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, February 25, 1999*

Mr. RUSH. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased today to join with several of my colleagues upon the introduction of The Urban Asthma Reduction Act of 1999.

My bill takes an important step towards increasing the federal commitment to reducing the high rate of asthma-related illnesses and hospitalizations of inner city children who suffer from asthma and who also are allergic to cockroach allergen. In 1997, the National Institutes of Health (National Institutes of Allergy and Infectious Diseases) reported conclusively that asthmatic children who were both allergic to cockroaches, and exposed to high cockroach allergen levels, were hospitalized 3.3 times more often than children who were either only exposed or allergic.

The link between asthma and allergy to cockroaches is a serious public health concern. In light of the NIH findings, there should be increased federal assistance to communities to address this problem.

Asthma is on the rise, especially in inner cities. Last year, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Prevention reported that more than 15 million Americans suffer from asthma—an increase of 75 percent between 1980 and 1994.

Asthma is a growing concern for the poor and minority communities, especially African-American and Latinos. In 1993, among children and adults, African Americans were 3 to 4 times more likely to die from asthma.

The social and economic costs are high. These children are more likely to miss school more often, go to the doctor or emergency room more frequently, and lose sleep. Consequently, the adults who care for these children may have to miss work to care for them. According to the Washington Post (April 24, 1998) the Centers for Disease Control reported that costs related to asthma were estimated to be \$6.2 billion in 1990, and expected to more than double by the year 2000.

The Urban Asthma Reduction Act of 1999 asks for action. The bill proposes to amend the Preventive Health and Health Services Block Grant Program, authorized by the Public Health Service Act, by adding integrated cockroach management to rodent control as an eligible activity for funding.

Integrated cockroach management is a multi-faceted approach to controlling the prevalence of cockroaches while minimizing pesticide use. It involves a range of techniques that include building cleaning and maintenance, and using pesticides as a means of last resort. The funds could be used for structural rehabilitation of buildings. This includes patching holes or open pipes that allow cockroaches entry; caulking cracks in walls; moving bushes away from buildings so cockroaches do not have easy access; and ensuring that all windows are properly screened.

The Urban Asthma Reduction Act creates new possibilities for communities that are serious about making integrated pest management a component of a comprehensive public health policy. My hope is that the Urban Asthma Reduction Act of 1999 will prove a viable tool for urban communities to improve the quality and life of all residents, but especially children who suffer from asthma.

#### A TRIBUTE TO TAYLOR COUNTY FIRE AND RESCUE

#### HON. ALLEN BOYD

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, February 25, 1999*

Mr. BOYD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the Taylor County Fire Rescue Department, for their courage and devotion in the face of disaster.

This past summer, the Florida Gas Transmission Company's Perry Gas Compressor exploded. Flames raged for nearly seven hours, injuring five people and leveling six homes in the area. Taylor County Fire Rescue responded first, with firefighters from other areas offering assistance.

Taylor County Rescue Chief Ashley Newell, firefighter Lt. Peter Bishop, firefighter Danny Hunter and volunteer Sonny Buckhalter demonstrated considerable courage under pressure. While fighting the fire from the first explosion, a secondary explosion caught the men off guard, trapping them near advancing flames. Only hasty action on their part prevented injuries from becoming fatalities. Their quick decisions saved the lives of several citizens and averted extensive property damage.

Mr. Speaker, It is with great honor that I pay tribute to Taylor County Fire Rescue Department. By placing their lives in danger, these firefighters have shown great courage and devotion to the protection of their community.